

February 22, 2013

To: Executive Board

Subject: **Foothill Transit Service and Maintenance Review**

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## **Recommendation**

Receive and file a report on Foothill Transit's on-street service and fleet and facility maintenance.

## **Background**

First Transit, Inc. has been providing operations and maintenance at Foothill Transit's Pomona facility for several years. After a competitive procurement, First Transit's contract in Pomona was renewed in November 2011 and services under the new agreement began on January 1, 2012 to operate and maintain Foothill Transit's 170 CNG buses and three electric buses at the Pomona facility. Foothill Transit issued Request for Proposals (RFP) No. 12-002 on November 29, 2011 for the operation of transit services for the Arcadia facility. The incumbent firm received the highest technical scores with First Transit ranking second in that category. First Transit was the lowest price and received the maximum points allowed for that category, thus making them the highest ranked proposer.

At the April 27, 2011 meeting, the Executive Board authorized the Executive Director to negotiate final contract terms and conditions and award a contract to First Transit for transit operations and maintenance services at the Foothill Transit Arcadia Facility. The agreement outlined a number of enhancements to the contract offered by First Transit and included incentives for performance that surpasses Foothill Transit's on-time performance, customer service and maintenance standards.

As directed by the Executive Board, both RFPs contained several changes to the procurement documents previously used including: (1) invoicing based on a combination of a fixed monthly fee and a variable rate per revenue mile operated; (2) performance measurement and invoicing based on systemwide data collected from Foothill Transit's SMARTBus system; (3) emphasis on the proposer's approach to managing key cost drivers and (4) clarifications to the performance requirements and vehicle and fleet condition and maintenance requirements.

Turnover activities to First Transit at the Arcadia facility began immediately following the execution of the agreement and included the hiring and on-boarding process for 356 of the 363 coach operators, dispatchers, technicians and administrative personnel. Additionally, a complete audit and inspection of Foothill Transit's fleet, facility and equipment at the Arcadia location to ensure that all Foothill Transit assets were returned in a condition that met Foothill Transit's standards was conducted.

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First Transit, Inc. began providing operating and maintenance services for 121 CNG buses and 23 diesel buses operating out of Foothill Transit's facility in Arcadia on July 1, 2012.

As outlined in the contracts at both locations, the operations and maintenance contractors

“...shall coordinate, manage, and control all activities necessary to perform Work and carry out its responsibilities under this Agreement, which include, but are not limited to, the following: maintaining all Revenue Vehicles and Non-Revenue Vehicles; providing Non-Revenue Vehicles for support and relief; providing operators, mechanics and all other project personnel, training personnel as necessary; developing administrative procedures and financial records; providing security for the Revenue and Non-Revenue Vehicles and the Facility; and developing methods to improve effectiveness and maximize service efficiency.”

The contract also stipulates that emphasis will be placed on maintaining courtesy to passengers, maximizing on-time performance as well as providing well-maintained and mechanically safe vehicles.

## **Analysis**

With the transition period now complete at both facilities, there are areas that are being closely monitored and improvement plans being developed. The sections below will provide additional information and activities related to several of these areas.

## **On-Time Performance**

Foothill Transit has set on-time performance as one of the key performance indicators in the area of operating an efficient transit system. Since 2003, 85 percent of the trips surveyed were on-time compared to the target of 90 percent. This statistic is based on limited numbers of data points that were collected via direct observations by quality assurance staff. As of July 1, 2012 Foothill Transit's on-time performance is now tracked and reported using the agency's *SMARTBus* system (SBS) which provides tens of thousands of timepoint checks each day compared to the 3,000 manually collected monthly data points used in the past.

Improvements to the SBS hardware and software continue to increase the system's functionality and reliability. A cross-functional team continues to work to identify and resolve data inconsistencies. Most recently, work has resulted in identifying data points that should not have been included in the schedule adherence calculations on the Commuter Express Service. This has resulted in a six percent increase in the Express Service On-Time Performance and a one percent increase in systemwide on-time

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performance. As there are thousands of data points collected daily by the system, the opportunity for data errors has increased exponentially.

Aside from data integrity issues, there are several challenges that have an impact on schedule adherence that have been identified and are being addressed. Among these are:

- Inconsistent traffic patterns affecting consistent daily running time
- Dispatch/Operations Controller Inefficiencies

Throughout the region, traffic patterns are affected by congestion, construction, and rolling detours. Foothill Transit's public timetables are adjusted twice a year. New Bus Books are published and the website is updated to ensure customers have access to accurate schedule information with every major service change. Known long-term traffic issues are incorporated into the published schedules. Because the public timetables cannot account for changing traffic patterns, a real-time customer information system is being implemented and will go live to the public at the beginning of Fiscal Year 2014. The system will alert customers to traffic issues and provide information on when the next bus will arrive based on real-time traffic information and bus location.

An effective and efficient dispatch function is imperative in maintaining proper on-time performance. One of the primary functions of the SBS is to act as a Computer Aided Dispatch and provide real-time performance information of the entire Foothill Transit fleet. Both contracts contain requirements that each location provide a training program to members of their team that includes information on the purpose, objectives, capabilities, and key features of the SBS system; methods and procedures for monitoring late trips, early departures, time point no-shows as well as other conditions that could negatively impact schedule adherence. First Transit is working to reinforce their training programs on the use of the SBS system. Concurrently, an administrative cross-functional team is working with XEROX, the vendor of the SBS system, and representatives of each of the operating facilities to provide additional clarity on the function and plans for enhancing the dispatch function through the use of the SBS in monitoring and responding to necessary service modifications.

### **Operational Issues**

A number of customer service and contractual areas are also being closely monitored including:

- ***Bus Appearance/Cleanliness*** - The most recent fleet maintenance audit conducted in January 2013 revealed that the number of cosmetic body/interior defects increased in both locations compared to the audit conducted in October 2012. Exterior cosmetic defects consisted primarily

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of tree scratches to the upper curb-side portion of the coach. This chronic issue is addressed by the contractor regularly buffing and repainting the coaches and will need to be addressed long-term by working with our member cities to ensure regularly scheduled tree-trimming along the affected routes. We are working with First Transit to ensure they have plans and practices in place to improve overall cleanliness.

- **Customer Comments** – Customer Comments in December 2012 were below the performance target at 10 per 100,000 boardings. This indicator has been trending downward following a high level of complaints subsequent to the turnover of the Arcadia operations and maintenance contract. This indicator continues to be closely monitored and issues identified are promptly responded to by First Transit and the administrative teams. We have a focused team of administrative staff members and First Transit personnel working specifically on ways to improve service and improve the way we process customers complaints with the overall goal of reducing complaints.
- **Safety & Security** - Foothill Transit has established a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) benchmark for safety of 0.6 (or fewer) preventable accidents per 100,000 miles. Since July, 2012, the number of preventable accidents generated from the Arcadia coach operators has increased. This issue was addressed with First Transit through the meetings established between the administrative and First Transit safety and security teams and immediate action was taken. Subsequently, the preventable accident numbers went from 10 in December to two in January. This corresponds to 1.83 preventable accidents per 100,000 miles in December to 0.35 per 100,000 miles in January. First Transit has committed to continue to make this a top priority for both operating locations.
- **Fare Classification** – Operators are required to classify cash fares on the farebox at the time a customer boards. This provides ridership counts for accounting and as well as information on the fare products that are being utilized. Since September 2011, unclassified fares have been exceeded the 3% acceptable range. The majority of these unclassified fares are from a small percentage of bus operators. Reports and listings of major offenders has been provided to First Transit on at least two occasions alerting them to the problem and the amount should liquidated damages be assessed. First Transit continues to work with the operators who repeatedly fail to appropriately classify fares. We have asked First Transit to specifically focus on those operators who have high rates of violations.

## Action Plans

In order to address operational and service quality issues, the following actions are underway:

- **Direct Communication with First Transit Senior Management** – Executive Director Doran Barnes and First Transit Vice President Nick Promponas are meeting at least weekly via conference call or in person to discuss issues, progress, and opportunities for improvement.
- **Strategic Internal Leadership Meetings** – Department Directors across several functional areas are meeting weekly to identify, address and provide updates on areas for improvement and report progress on areas already identified. These meetings also provide an opportunity to coordinate activities taking place at the operating facilities and provide updates on various First Transit projects.
- **Issues Log** – A listing of issues that need to be addressed by each team has been developed. This log will outline actions taken toward resolution, team members involved and milestones dates. The log will ensure that all team members are tracking the same set of issues
- **Quality Assurance Inspections** – Quality Insurance Inspectors from the administrative team will continue to have a presence in Dispatch to review, observe and report performance to the various functional teams.
- **SMARTBus Utilization** – Monthly in-person meetings and weekly conference calls have been and will continue to be conducted to address usage of the SBS to support schedule adherence activities. Representatives from Operations, Planning, IT, and both First Transit locations are actively involved in these meetings. Action items are developed and followed-up on at each meeting or project status call. Quality Insurance Inspectors will continue to conduct virtual gate checks to monitor buses to ensure that they leave the facilities on-time, as well as monitor schedule adherence and dispatcher response to service issues.
- **Gate Checks** – Administrative team members will continue to monitor schedules and bus appearance standards at each location each week. Results of these checks will be communicated with the General Managers of each facility and their designees. Follow-up on action items will also continue.
- **Audits** – Independent Coach Operator and Bus Fleet quarterly audits will continue, with action items developed and follow-up plans established following each audit to address any issues identified.

- **Customer Comments** – The cross functional team devoted to addressing customer comments will continue to convene monthly meetings. Complaints/Comments will be further analyzed to quickly identify and address any trends as early as possible.

## Positive Trends

- **Environmental Compliance** – In 2011, Foothill Transit adopted an agency-wide Environmental Policy to serve as written communication of our intent to implement sustainable, innovative solutions that measure and improve our environmental performance. First Transit has worked alongside members of Foothill Transit's administrative team to comply with the commitments made in this policy. Examples include: compliance with applicable local, state, and federal environmental regulations and policies; minimization of significant environmental aspects; continued overall improvements in environmental consciousness and prevention of pollution.
- **Substance Abuse Management Program** – First Transit's Substance Abuse Management program is being well run and testing, documentation, and reporting activity is in conformance with the contract. Personnel files are being maintained properly. Safety sensitive staff testing is being done as required (random and post event). Audits of specimen collection sites are being performed. The annual MIS report was submitted well before the DOT deadline.
- **Safety Solutions Team** - A Safety Solutions Committee was developed at the Arcadia facility whose activities have included delivering additional Operator trainings to target the primary cause of preventable accidents (collisions with fixed objects due to failure to allow space). Road supervisors have been directed to provide more proactive oversight and inspection of coach operators and buses in the field.
- **Facility Cleanliness** – Foothill Transit installed and implemented a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) in August 2012. The CMMS is a web-based software that provides weekly, daily, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual activity work orders for the maintenance and upkeep of the physical facility, mechanical and electrical components of the building, and landscaping. Since implementation of this system, First Transit has been fully utilizing the CMMS and each facility has been well maintained and clean as evidenced by the result of Foothill Transit's Facility Quarterly Inspection on January 23, 2013.

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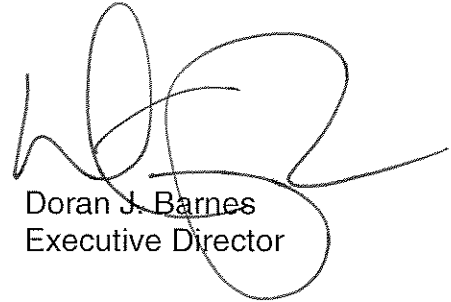
**Budget Impact**

This is a status update item only. There is no budget impact.

Sincerely,



LaShawn King Gillespie  
Director of Customer Service & Operations



Doran J. Barnes  
Executive Director